

Pu'ukohola Heiau

In 1790, King Kamehameha I began building Pu'ukohola Heiau, a great temple dedicated to the war god Ku. What is a *heiau*? It is a shrine, a place of worship of the various gods in the Hawaiian religion. A heiau is where a *kahuna* (priest) communicated with the gods, and then advised the *ali'i* (chief). When the *kapu* (taboo) social system was overthrown in 1819, most heiaus were abandoned and destroyed or dismantled. Only their stone platforms remained. Rituals and the formal worship of gods ended. An important part of Hawaiian culture began to disappear.



Today, Pu-ukohola Heiau National Historic Site not only preserves the Hawaiian past, it also helps to promote present-day Hawaiian culture. Every August, at the Hawaiian Cultural Festival, visitors can experience native traditions and customs, and learn about Hawaiian music, dance, crafts, and history.

To learn more, visit: www.nps.gov/puhe/